

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendment and the following remarks.

Claims 1-22 remain pending in the application. Claim 1 has been amended to correct a minor matter of form. Nothing substantive has been changed in the claim. For the reasons stated below, Applicant respectfully submits that claims pending in this application are in condition for allowance.

In the Office Action, the claims were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over a combination of Lin (US 2003/0212841 A1) and Perry et al. (US 2003/0236910 A1); or further in combination with Luke (US 6,233,640). These grounds of rejection are respectfully traversed.

As understood by the Examiner, Lin does not disclose a buffer circuit interfaced with said first hot plug/hot swap interface, said second hot plug/hot swap interface and said storage interface so as to process data among said first host, said second host and said storage medium. In addition, Lin does not disclose that “when only one of said first host and said second host is effectively interfaced with said apparatus, said storage medium is appended to said effectively interfaced host and said apparatus provides access to said storage medium from said effectively interfaced host, and when both said first host and said second host are effectively interfaced with said apparatus, said storage medium is appended to one of said first host and said second host and said apparatus provides bridging between said first host and said second host as well as access to said storage medium from both said first host and said second host”, as recited in the claims 1, 10 and 20 of the present application. To the contrary, the apparatus of the present

application behaves like a mass storage device when a single host is connected, and behaves as a bridging device when two hosts are connected. In any case, the storage medium is appended to one host only, as shown in the flow chart of Figure 4. Under the bridging circumstance, another host can access the storage medium only through, by means of a bridging function, the one host that the storage medium is appended to. As such, the present application can resolve data incompleteness issues raised by multiple accesses from hosts.

Moreover, Perry discloses that “[t]he host-to-host (HTH) message passing procedure... is mediated by the DCU 12” and “the DCU 12 need not read, interpret or otherwise act on the message payload” in paragraph 27. To the contrary, the buffer circuit of the present application needs to be “interfaced with said first hot plug/hot swap interface, said second hot plug/hot swap interface and said storage interface so as to process data among said first host, said second host and said storage medium,” as recited in claims 1, 10 and 20. Nowhere in Perry is there disclosed the data processing procedure among the hosts and the storage medium.

Luke does overcome the deficiencies outlined above.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the references, taken singly, or in combination, fail to disclose or to suggest each and limitation recited in the claims, and Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the pending rejections be reconsidered and withdrawn.

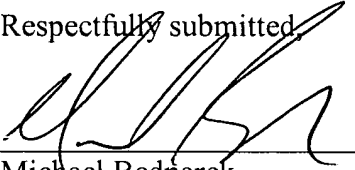
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In view of the foregoing all of the claims in this case are believed to be in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner have any questions or determine that any further action is desirable to place this application in even better condition for issue, the Examiner is encouraged to telephone applicant's undersigned representative at the number listed below.

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Respectfully submitted,

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